

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3215

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4495

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MO

SUBJ: KING'S PRESS CONFERENCE: INTERNAL ASPECTS

1. SUMMARY: KING AT PRESS CONFERENCE SEPT 17 STATED HE HOPED TO SEE ELECTED PARLIAMENT BY OCT 1975, PRECEDED BY 6-7 MONTHS OF PREPARATION INVOLVING NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT INCLUDING OPPOSITION LEADERS. HE DISCOUNTED POSSIBILITY OF GENERAL AMNESTY, BUT NOTED SOME DETAINEES HAD BEEN QUIETLY RELEASED. HE DID NOT FORESEE FURTHER EXECUTIONS. WHILE KING'S TIMETABLE HAS STRETCHED RE ELECTIONS, HIS STATEMENT WAS CLEARLY INTENDED AS A MAJOR CONCILIATORY GESTURE. ASSUMING RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN PALACE AND OPPOSITION PROGRESSES TO AGREEMENT ON BASIS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION, PARTIES WILL HAVE THEIR WORK CUT OUT FOR THEM IF THEY ARE TO MAKE A DECENT SHOWING IN ELECTIONS EVEN A YEAR FROM NOW. END SUMMARY

2. IN SEPT 17 PRESS CONFERENCE DEALING MAINLY WITH SAHARA (SEPTEL), KING DID NOT TOUCH ON INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PRELIMINARY STATEMENT BUT DEALT WITH THEM DURING QUESTION PERIOD. HE MAINTAINED THAT NATIONAL UNITY SHOULD NOT STOP WITH SAHARA ISSUE AND DECLARED HIMSELF IN FAVOR OF QUICKER MOVEMENT TOWARD CONSOLIDATION OF SUCH UNITY AND TOWARD SELF-GOVERNMENT. HE HOPED THAT BY OCTOBER, 1975, COUNTRY COULD HAVE MATURE, CONSCIOUS AND AUTHENTIC ELECTED
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PARLIAMENT. NECESSARY PREPARATION FOR ELECTIONS, INCLUDING

SETTING UP ELECTION LISTS, LAWS AND DISTRICTS, COULD TAKE SIX TO SEVEN MONTHS. NATIONAL UNITY CABINET, INCLUDING OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS AS MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, ENVISAGED AS PART OF PREPARATIONS. MOROCCO, HE STRESSED, HAD ITS OWN SPECIAL WAY OF DOING THINGS AND WORKING OUT ITS OWN PROBLEMS IN AMICABLE FASHION.

3. REPLYING TO QUESTIONS ON POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POSSIBILITY OF AMNESTY, KING ARGUED THERE NO POLITICAL DETAINEES FROM LEGAL POINT OF VIEW. THERE WERE SOME WHO HAD STARTED WITH POLITICAL ACTIVITY BUT DEGENERATED INTO CRIMINAL ACTS OF BOMBING AND KILLING. KING SAID THERE HAD BEEN UNPUBLICIZED PROVISIONAL RELEASES OF DETAINEES AGAINST WHOM COURTS HAD DECIDED THERE NO CASE. KING, HOWEVER, INDICATED HE DID NOT FAVOR GENERAL AMNESTY. HE ALSO STATED THAT, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF CRIMINAL CASES, HE DID NOT ENVISAGE THERE WOULD BE FURTHER EXECUTIONS AT THIS TIME.

4. COMMENT: QUIET RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES SHOULD IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN PALACE AND PARTIES AND SET STAGE FOR INITIATION OF DIALOGUE ON QUESTION OF PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT. THIS DIALOGUE ITSELF COULD, OF COURSE, PROVE TO BE DIFFICULT, AS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF PRINCIPLE ARE INVOLVED AND THERE IS RESIDUE OF SUSPICION ON BOTH SIDES.

5. WHILE ELECTIONS HAVE SLIPPED CONSIDERABLY FROM KING'S MOST RECENT TIMETABLE OF "AFTER THE HARVEST OR IN EARLY 1975," OPPOSITION PARTIES SHOULD NEVERTHELESS BE PLEASED THAT KING ADDRESSED INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH RELATIVE CLARITY AND DIRECTNESS. AS ELECTIONS WILL REQUIRE, IN KING'S VIEW, PREPARATIONS LASTING 6-7 MONTHS, THIS WILL GIVE PARTIES MUCH TO WORK ON EVEN NOW. NEW USFP IS THINKING OF CONGRESS IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS, AND BOTH IT AND ISTIQLAL WILL HAVE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ATROPHIED ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDERABLY IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO MAKE RESPECTABLE SHOWING EVEN IN OCTOBER 1975.
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